

Factual Note on the indigeneous tribal people of the  
Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, with  
special reference to the Onges, Sentinelese and Jarawas.

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands have six indigenous tribes of which four are located in Andaman District and belong to the Negrito group, while two are located in the Nicobar District and belong to the Mongoloid group. Of the six tribal groups, the Nicobarese are the largest in number and their population was estimated to be about 26,000 at the time of the census of 1991. The Nicobarese are the most advanced of the six tribal groups, and they inhabit 12 islands in the Nicobar Group. The second tribe in the Mongoloid group are the Shompens who are located only in Great Nicobar Island over 500 kms to the south of Port Blair.

Great Andamanese

Reverting to the Negrito tribes in the Andaman District, the Great Andamanese were considerably numerous and estimated to have been of the order of over 10,000 towards end of the last century. Their number began diminishing not only with the arrival of the British, but more so with the establishment of penal settlements in 1858, to the extent that their numbers had diminished to only 19 by the mid 1960s. With a view to saving this tribe from complete extinction they were resettled in Strait Island in 1969. Over the last three decades their number has gradually increased and is now reached 41. They are administered by a body dedicated to the welfare of primitive tribes established in 1976 known as the Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti(AAJVS), through the establishment of a Cooperative Society called the Great